



Idaho Highway Users, Inc.

SURVEY OF IDAHO DRIVERS

September 2008

ER
ELWAY RESEARCH, INC.



Idaho Highway Users, Inc

Survey of Idaho Drivers

September 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Key Findings.....	1
Introduction.....	4
Methods	5
Respondent Profile.....	6
Summary of Findings.....	7
Ten Trips a Week Are Common	8
Roads and Bridges Important to Economy and Lifestyle ...	10
C+ Ratings for Roads and Bridges.....	11
Roads and Bridges Should Be Top Legislative Priorities	12
6 in 10 Support Additional Transportation Funding.....	13
Respondents Rate Potential Funding Sources	15
3 in 10 Heard of Transportation Funding Conferences	16

KEY FINDINGS

SUMMARY

There is considerable evidence that the drivers of Idaho would support more funds for highway, road, street, and bridge improvements. They:

- Give the existing transportation infrastructure in the state mediocre grades,
- Tend to consider such improvements in the top three state priorities,
- Use the roads often, for multiple purposes, and
- Overwhelmingly say that they would support such funds being raised.

♦ **Almost all of the respondents said that roads and bridges are either “vital” or “important” to both the economy and lifestyle of Idaho**

- In terms of the economy, 51% said “vital” and 44% “important” for a total of 95%.
- In terms of the lifestyle, 43% said “vital” and 50% “important,” for a total of 93%.

♦ **Each element of the transportation infrastructure was given a C+ grade.** On an “A” to “F” (4.0 to 0) scale, the grade point averages were:

- 2.9 for bridges;
- 2.6 for major highways;
- 2.5 for city/town streets; and
- 2.4 for county roads.

♦ **A large majority of drivers (70%) considered “increased funding for Idaho’s roads and bridges” one of the state’s top priorities:**

- 23% said that was a “top priority;” and
- 47% said it was in the “top 2 or 3 priorities.”

- ◆ **Almost 2 in 3 (62%) said that they would support raising additional transportation funding**
 - IF they were confident that the money would go to “efficiently operate and maintain Idaho’s roads and bridges.”
- ◆ **Of those who would support raising additional transportation funding, preferences included:**
 - Assessing fees on new developers (total of 70% in favor; 44% “strongly favor”);
 - Allowing local government the option to assess local taxes if the voters in the area approved the tax (total of 54% in favor; 21% “strongly favor”);
 - Increased vehicle registration fees (total of 50% in favor; 15% “strongly favor”);
 - Increasing the fuel tax (total of 25% in favor; 70% opposed);
 - A tax on miles traveled (total of 67% opposed; 49% “strongly opposed”);
 - Tolls (total of 74% opposed; 60% “strongly opposed”); and
 - A gas sales tax (total of 82% opposed; 68% “strongly opposed”).

Not surprisingly, many drivers wanted the money to come from someone other than themselves (usually in the form of fees on developments). This is to be expected in a relatively short survey in which pro and con rationale was not presented. Nor were respondents made aware of how much revenue each of the various funding options would likely generate. Instead, the survey respondents were asked for a quick reaction to a list of options, unlike attendees at Idaho’s Transportation Funding Conferences, where participants could discuss the questions, receive information and view related materials.

There is also notable support for increasing vehicle registration fees to raise funds. Further, there is appreciable support for allowing local governments the option of assessing local taxes.

There is evidence from this survey that additional knowledge of the issue is related to higher levels of support for funding options. For example, survey respondents who had heard of Idaho’s Transportation Funding Conferences were more likely to rate road and bridge funding as a “top priority” than those who were unaware of the conferences (32% vs. 19%).

Furthermore, 47% of the conference surveys supported increased fuel taxes. This compares to 23% support from all the telephone respondents and 30% of those who had heard of the conferences and/or supported raising additional funds. Those aware of the conferences were more likely to support each of the seven funding options than were those who had not heard of the conferences. Being aware of Idaho's Transportation Funding Conferences is not the same as taking part in them, to be sure. Yet these findings suggest that as drivers become more aware of the issue and proposals, they are more open to the discussion of the funding options.

All of this intended support comes with the significant impression that the support depends on being "confident the money (is) going to efficiently operate and maintain Idaho's roads and bridges."



Idaho Highway Users, Inc

Survey of Idaho Drivers

September 2008

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the results of a telephone survey conducted by Elway Research for the Idaho Highway Users. The survey interviewed Idaho residents with driver's licenses to assess their impressions of the condition of the state's highways, roads, and bridges. Respondents were also queried about the possibility of raising funds to improve Idaho's transportation infrastructure. The drivers were also asked about:

- Their own driving habits;
- The importance of roads and bridges to Idaho's economy and their lifestyles;
- Preferences for potential sources of more funding; and
- Awareness of the Idaho's Transportation Funding Conferences.

Demographic information was included in order to compare and contrast the profiles of those with various opinions.

This report organizes the survey findings and analysis in order of the research questions listed above. Each section contains a narrative interpretation of findings followed by annotated charts of the pertinent survey results.

METHODS

SAMPLE:	600 Idaho residents who reported that they had valid driver's licenses.
TECHNIQUE:	Telephone Survey
FIELD DATES:	September 11-14, 2008
MAXIMUM MARGIN OF ERROR:	± 4 at the 95% confidence interval. That is, in theory, had all similarly qualified Idaho residents been interviewed, there is a 95% chance that, the results would be within $\pm 4\%$ of the results in this survey.
DATA COLLECTION:	Calls were made during weekday evenings and weekend days. Trained, professional interviewers under supervision conducted all interviews. Up to four attempts were made to contact a head of household at each number in the sample before a substitute number was called. Questionnaires were edited for completeness, and a percentage of each interviewer's calls were re-called for verification.

Although great care and the most rigorous methods available were employed in the design, execution and analysis of this survey, these results can be interpreted only as representing the answers given by these respondents to these questions at the time they were interviewed.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

In interpreting these findings, it is important to keep in mind the characteristics of the people actually interviewed. This table presents a profile of the 600 respondents in the survey.

Note: Here and throughout this report, percentages may not add to 100%, due to rounding.

TABLE 1
Respondent Profile

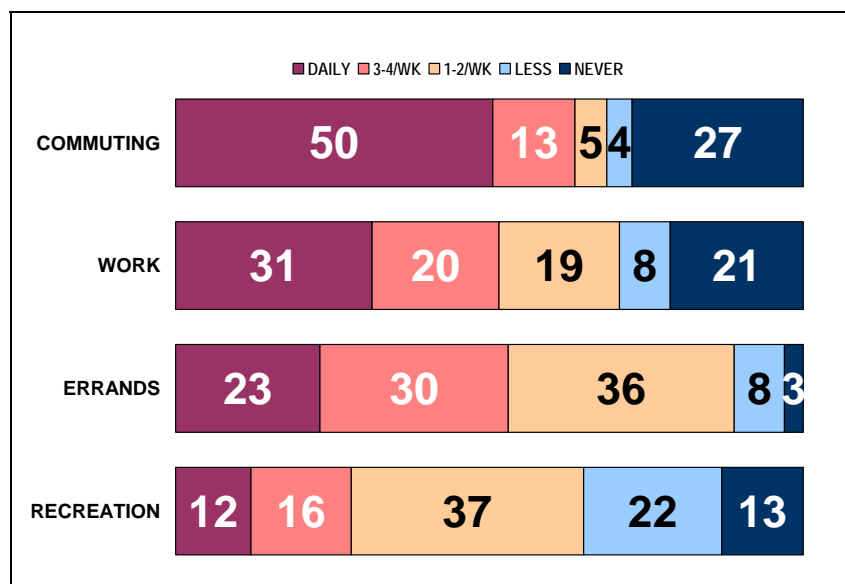
GENDER:	49% Male 51% Female
AGE:	5% 16-24 10% 25-34 17% 35-44 22% 45-54 26% 55-64 9% 65-74 9% 75+ 2% No Answer
COMMUNITY:¹	50% Urban 48% Rural 2% Don't know
REGION:	11% 1 – North 9% 2 – North Central 45% 3 – Southwest 11% 4 – South Central 14% 5 – Southeast 11% 6 – East
INCOME:	20% \$25,000 or less 24% \$25 to \$50,000 21% \$50 to \$75,000 18% Over \$75,000 18% No Answer

¹ Taken from respondents' description of their community.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Major findings are presented in the following section in the form of annotated graphs and bullets.

Ten Trips a Week Are Common



Q5: The next few questions are about how you use the roads and highways. For each of the following purposes, tell me whether you drive Every day, 3-4 Times a Week, Once or Twice a Week, Less Than Once A Week, Or Never.. How often do you drive for...

- ◆ **Half of the respondents commute daily. The remainder commutes 3-4/week or drives during work, run errands, and/or go out for recreation.**
 - The estimated weekly average for drive trips = 10 (see Table 2).²
 - This number varies little around the state.

Table 2
Average Number of Trips, by Region

REGION	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6
Avg. # of trips per week							
Total	10.2	10.4	10.4	10.3	9.9	9.7	10.4
Commute	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.2	2.3	2.6	3.0
During/at Work	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.4	2.3	2.6
Shopping/Errands	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.6
Recreation	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.1

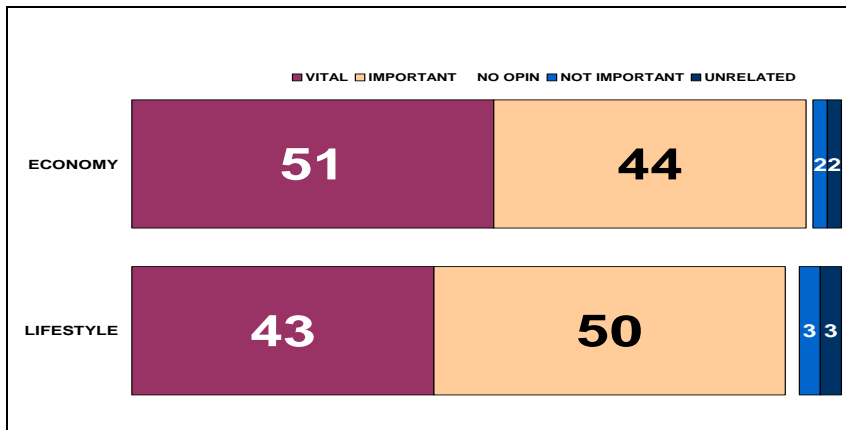
² The average is calculated by assigning 5 to "daily trips," 3.5 to "3 or 4 trips," and 1.5 to "1 or 2 trips." This is a conservative estimate, since it assumes that none of the trips are combined.

- ◆ **The average total weekly trips did vary by age and income:**
 - Respondents under age 55 made an average of 12 weekly trips.
 - This compared to fewer than 10 among 55-64 year olds, and 6 among those 65+.
 - Respondents with household incomes of below \$25,000 made an average of 8 weekly drive trips, compared to 11 for those with higher incomes.
- ◆ **The total drive trip numbers were also used to produce a “drive index,” with the respondents divided into quartiles:**
 - The average trips/week for each group is shown in Table 3.
 - These groups will be used for further analysis.

Table 3
Average Number of Trips, by Categories

	Average # weekly trips
Drive Index	
Most frequent	17.2
Somewhat frequent	12.2
Somewhat infrequent	8.1
Least frequent	3.5
By Age	
16-34	12.8
35-54	11.9
55-64	9.6
65+	6.4
By Income	
<\$25,000	7.8
\$25-\$50K	10.5
\$50-\$75K	11.9
\$75,000+	11.2

Roads and Bridges Important to Both Economy and Lifestyle in Idaho



Q3: When you think about Idaho's economy, would you say that roads and bridges are...

Q4: When you think about the lifestyle in Idaho, would you say that roads and bridges are...

◆ **The tendency to say "vital" goes up with more driving:**

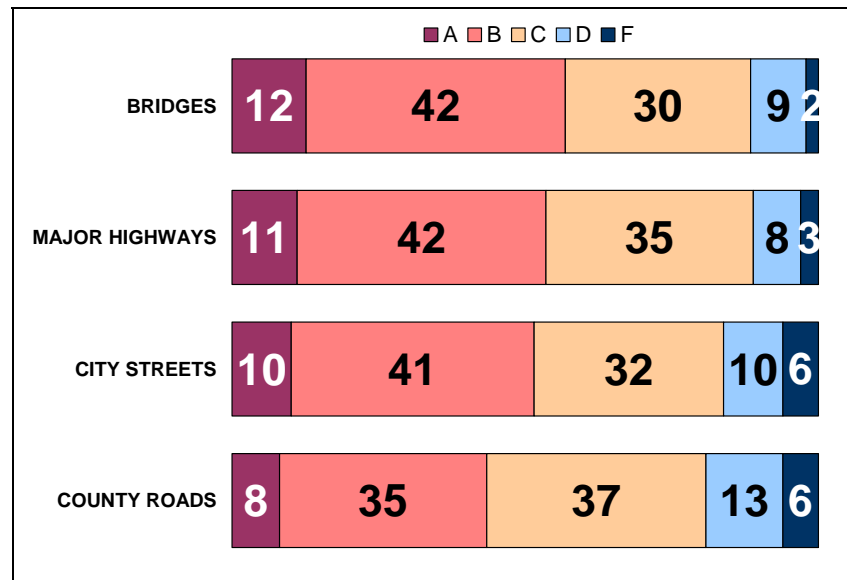
- A reply of "vital" to the economy of the state goes from
 - 45% of the "least frequent" drivers,
 - 49% from "somewhat infrequent,"
 - 54% of the "somewhat frequent" drivers, and
 - 56% of those on the roads most frequently.
- A reply of "vital" to the lifestyle of the state goes from
 - 39% among the lowest two levels of driving frequency, to
 - 46% of the "somewhat frequent" drivers, and
 - 48% of those on the roads most frequently.

◆ **"Vital to the economy" is more often said by drivers with higher incomes. This is true of**

- 56% of those with household incomes over \$50,000 versus
- 54% with incomes from \$25K to \$50K, and
- 47% of those with household income under \$25,000.

◆ **There was no variation between regions or community types.**

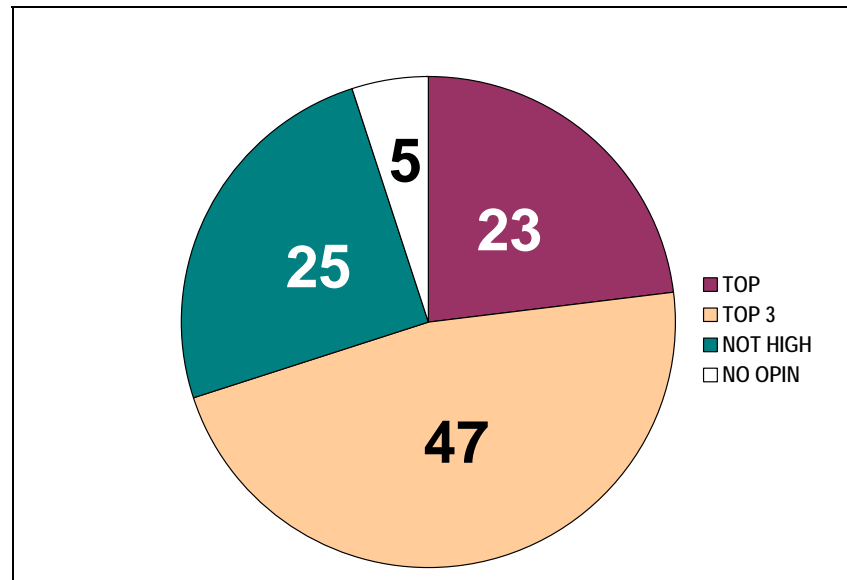
“C+” Grade for Roads and Bridges



Q7: Next, I am going to list some parts of the Idaho transportation system. As I do, I would like you to rate each one. We will use a letter grade, as they do in school, with "A" for excellent, "B" for good, "C" for satisfactory, "D" for unsatisfactory, and "F" for failing.

- ◆ **"Grade point averages," assuming a scale with an "A" as 4, were all between a "B" and a "C":**
 - 2.9 for bridges,
 - 2.6 for major highways,
 - 2.5 for "streets in your city or town," and
 - 2.4 for "county roads in your county."
- ◆ **The grade point averages varied slightly around the state.**
 - The lowest averages were a "2.0" given to the county roads in Region 5, and a "2.1" earned by the streets in Region 2. See Table 4.
 - The highest averages were 2.9-3.3 for the bridges in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 and 2.9 for major highways in Region 6.
- ◆ **There were no appreciable differences in grades between those who ultimately supported rising additional funding and those who did not.**

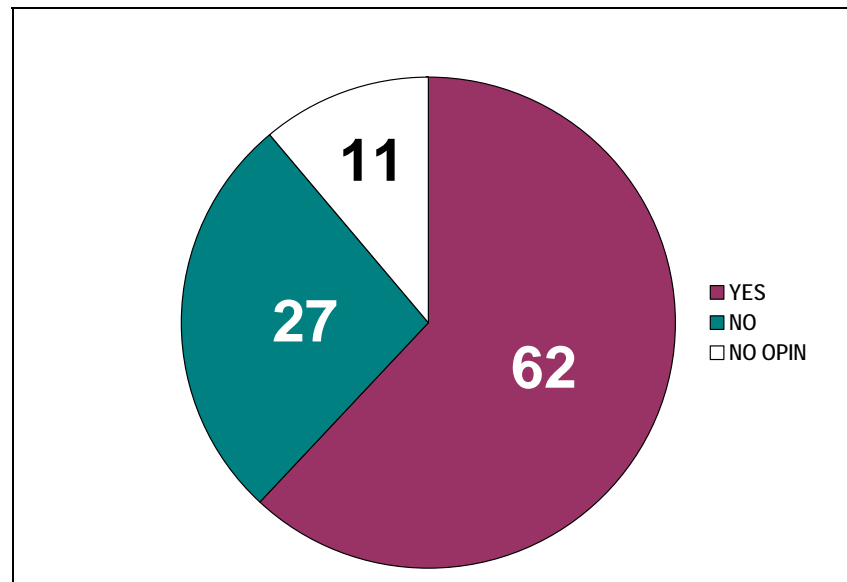
7 in 10 Said Road and Bridge Funding Should Be Among Top Legislative Priorities



Q8: Would you say that increasing funding for Idaho's roads and bridges should be a top priority for the legislature, one of the top two or three priorities, or not as high as other issues?

- ◆ **Urban drivers were more likely than rural to say that increased funding should be "top priority" (27% vs. 18%).**
- ◆ **Age also made a difference: The older the driver, the more likely s/he was to say "top priority."** This was true of:
 - 33% of those 65+,
 - 25% of 55 - 64 year olds,
 - 20% of ages 35 - 54, and
 - 16% of 16 - 34 year olds.
- ◆ **There was also regional variation.**
 - The regions with the highest % saying "top" were Region 2 (31%) and Region 3 (27%). See Table 3.
 - Region 4 had the lowest % saying "top priority" (10%).
- ◆ **The most likely group overall to say "top priority" were those who had heard of the Idaho's Transportation Funding Conferences:**
 - 32% of this group called road/bridge funding "top priority," vs.
 - 19% who had not heard of the conferences.

6 in 10 Support Additional Transportation Funding



Q9: Would you support raising additional transportation funding if you were confident the money was going to efficiently operate and maintain Idaho's roads and bridges?

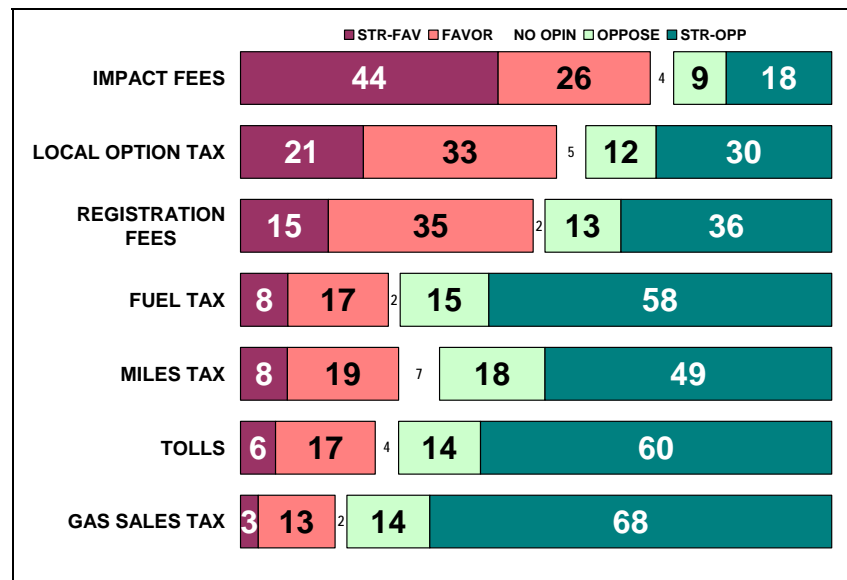
- ◆ **Support was slightly more prevalent in urban communities than rural (64% vs. 59%), and among women vs. men (64% and 59%).**
- ◆ **Even though younger drivers had been less likely to call road funding a top priority, they were more likely to support additional funding:**
 - 69% of those ages 16 - 34 said "yes," compared to
 - 64% of 35 - 54 year olds,
 - 62% of those 55 - 64, and
 - 52% of drivers over age 65.
- ◆ **There were few regional differences, except for lower support in Region 5:**
 - 53% in Region 5 said "yes," compared to
 - 60% to 66% of all other Regions. (See Table 4.)
- ◆ **There were no significant differences in response among the categories of driving frequency.**

Table 4
Regional Variations

REGION→	1	2	3	4	5	6
Grade Point Averages³						
Bridges	3.0	3.2	2.9	3.1	2.4	2.9
Major Highways	2.6	2.8	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.9
City/Town Streets	2.7	2.1	2.7	2.4	2.2	2.6
County Roads	2.6	2.2	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.6
Priority of More Funding for Roads and Bridges						
Top	22%	31%	27%	10%	18%	19%
Top 2 – 3	44%	37%	44%	65%	47%	54%
Not as High	28%	29%	23%	19%	34%	22%
Support for More Funding						
Yes	61%	63%	63%	66%	53%	60%
No	31%	27%	26%	16%	35%	28%
Don't Know	8%	10%	11%	18%	12%	12%

³ From a 4-point scale, where an "A- Excellent" = 4.0 and "F- Failing" = 0.

Respondents Rate Potential Funding Sources



Q10:I am going to read some potential sources of money for Idaho roads and bridges. As I read each one, tell me whether you would Strongly Support, Support, Oppose, or Strongly Oppose raising money from that source to pay for improvements in roads and bridges.

Not surprisingly, many drivers wanted the money to come from someone other than themselves (usually in the form of fees on developments). This is to be expected in a relatively short survey in which pro and con rationale was not presented. Nor were respondents made aware of how much revenue each of the various funding options would likely generate. Instead, the survey respondents were asked for a quick reaction to a list of options, unlike attendees at Idaho's Transportation Funding Conferences, where participants could discuss the questions, receive information and view related materials.

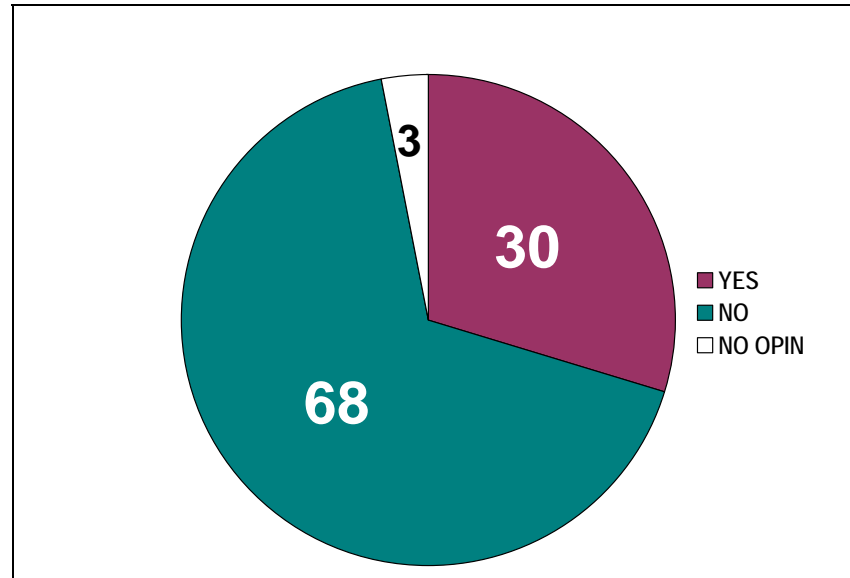
◆ **Of those who would support raising additional transportation funding, preferences included:**

- Allowing local government the option to assess local taxes if the voters in the area approved the tax (total of 54% in favor; 21% strongly favor); and
- Increased vehicle registration fees (total of 50% in favor; 15% strongly favor).

◆ **Regionally:**

- A tax on new developments was most popular in Regions 3 (76%), 4 (73%) and 6 (81%).
- Taxes on miles traveled were least popular in Region 1 (18% supporters.)

3 in 10 Had Heard of Idaho's Transportation Funding Conferences



Q11: Have you heard anything about Transportation Funding Conferences Governor Otter held this summer throughout Idaho?

◆ **Those most likely to have heard of Idaho's Transportation Funding Conferences included:**

- 39% of Region 3 drivers and 28% from Region 5;
- 39% of those with household incomes of at least \$75,000; and
- 39% of middle-aged drivers (ages 55-64.)

There is evidence from this survey that additional knowledge of the issue is related to higher levels of support for funding options. For example, survey respondents who had heard of Idaho's Transportation Funding Conferences were more likely to rate road and bridge funding as a "top priority" than those who were unaware of the conferences (32% vs. 19%).

Furthermore, 47% of the conference surveys supported increased fuel taxes. This compares to 23% support from all the telephone respondents and 30% of those who had heard of the conferences and/or supported raising additional funds. Those aware of the conferences were more likely to support each of the seven funding options than were those who had not heard of the conferences. Being aware of Idaho's Transportation Funding Conferences is not the same as taking part in them, to be sure. Yet these findings suggest that as drivers become more aware of the issue and proposals, they are more open to the discussion of the funding options.

All of this intended support comes with the significant impression that the support depends on being “confident the money (is) going to efficiently operate and maintain Idaho’s roads and bridges.”